



For Women's Lives

August 2008

Florida NOW Officers

President: Jessica McCaffrey
president@fnow.org

V-President: Donna Slutiak
dslutiak@vp@fnow.org

Treasurer: Lisa Labbe
treasurer@fnow.org

Secretary: Kim Guzma
secretary@fnow.org

Membership Director:
Jane Blanchard
membership@fnow.org

Legislative Director:
Meredith Ockman:
legislative@fllnow.org

Toll-free Fax and Voice-mail:
1-800-299-1710

****Let us hear from you**
We are here at your
behest.—tell us what you
want!**

CALL TO CONFERENCE

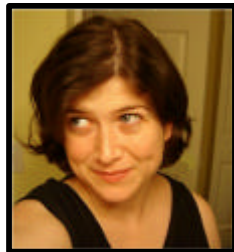
The 2009 Florida NOW state conference will be held in Jacksonville the weekend of May 2, 2009.

This is an election conference, so be sure to plan to attend!

Have you thought about being on the board of Florida NOW?
We need you.

Watch the website
www.flnow.org
For conference details.

A Message from Jessica



As I approach the end of the year several things are on my mind, the presidential elections, Amendment 2, my new year's resolutions.

I, like so many other NOW activists, supported a woman for president. I am still angered by the lack of condemnation, by the public, the media and the democratic party of the sexism that was hurled against Senator Clinton. Did I expect her opponents to object to her unfair treatment? No, not really. I did expect the leaders of the party, to which she devoted much of her life, to speak out against it, to protest it, to demand better. But rather than be bitter, I am ready to take action. Anger is what brought me into activism. I was angry about sexism, as I am now, and I looked for an organization that would give me a voice to fight for my rights to be respected as an individual.

NOW gives us all the opportunity to speak truth to power (to use an old second wave phrase) and to frame what we experience personally in a larger political context. This is the strength of NOW and the current election season is an opportunity to take what feels like a defeat and build a mighty, fierce feminist force of women who will not stop until we have torn down the oppressive systems that continue to thrive in our culture.

Many of us are working on the election issues. We must defeat Amendment 2 – the so called "marriage amendment" which seeks to strip our LGBTI community of the few protections we have. We have the power as individuals and as a unified organization to defeat this terrible amendment.

I look forward to continuing the important work we do into the new year.

In sisterhood,
Jessica McCaffrey

It was we, the people; not we the white male citizens; nor yet we, the male citizens; but we, the whole people, who formed the Union.... Men, their rights and nothing more; women, their rights and nothing less.
~Susan B. Anthony

Dates to Mark:

- Aug 11—Early voting
- August 26— Primary Election
- Oct 4—State Council meeting in Orlando
- November 4 —General Election
- May 2, 2009 Florida NOW State Conference

PAC NEEDS YOUR HELP

The Florida NOW PAC/CCE is the branch of our organization that endorses candidates and contributes to their campaigns. In order to be able to contribute, our CCE needs your contributions. Please send as much as you are able to:

FL NOW PAC
6825 NW 43 Place
Gainesville, FL 32 606
Please make it out to FLNOW PAC

Advertisement paid for by the
FLNOW PAC/CCE

See the FL NOW PAC/CCE Endorsements for the primary election as determined at the PAC/CCE meeting on July 26.

fnow.org/informed/candidates.html

The 2008 Florida NOW State Conference was held May 2-4 in West Palm Beach.

A variety of speakers and workshops were offered, and attendees came away energized and ready.

Thank you to North and South Palm Beach County Chapters for a job well done!

VOTE NO ON AMENDMENT 2

In November 2008, there will be a ballot initiative (Amendment 2) called the “Marriage Protection Act.”

Amendment 2 reads:

“Inasmuch as marriage is the legal union of only one man and one woman as husband and wife, no other legal union that is treated as marriage or the substantial equivalent thereof shall be valid or recognized.”

Florida NOW has joined over 200 other civic, labor, religious and advocacy organizations in the Fairness for All Families Coalition, and Florida Red & Blue to urge you to VOTE NO ON 2. Here’s why:

? RESPECT FOR SENIORS

Many Florida seniors live together without being married. We should respect their choice. Nobody should challenge their right to visit each other in the hospital, share resources, or have their will honored.

Senior advocates say: VOTE NO ON 2!

? FAIR TREATMENT FOR PUBLIC SERVANTS—AND THEIR KIDS

In 2004 the state of Michigan passed a “marriage protection amendment.” In 2007 a Michigan court ruled public employees were not entitled to domestic partner benefits. Since then, many public employers have canceled benefits. Precious few working people can cover their spouse and spouse's kids' health insurance. With domestic partnership programs, many public and private employees like firefighters, police, nurses, and teachers, have been able to provide this coverage for their families.

Unions say: VOTE NO ON 2!

? HONORING HEALTH CARE CHOICES

Lisa, a tourist, was preparing to sail on a cruise from the Port of Miami in 2007 when she had a brain hemorrhage. At the hospital Janice, her spouse of 20 years, and their three adopted children were not allowed to come in and see her. Even though they produced health care surrogate papers, the family waited for eight hours to see Lisa. At the point of death, the priest let them in for five minutes. With Amendment 2, this could happen to any unmarried couple and their children. How does this “protect marriage?”

? AMENDMENT 2 IS NOT NEEDED

Why? Because same-sex marriage is already illegal in Florida law. Not once. Or even twice. But four times.

Sources:

www.VoteNoOn2.com
npscnow@aol.com
www.votesmartflorida.org

Reminder from Lisa Labbe, Florida NOW Treasurer

We would like to remind each and every chapter that it is required of you to pay a share of every new member's dues to the state organization. For each new member who pays the full dues of \$35.00, you must send \$5.00 to state, in addition to the \$15.00 that you send to National. (There is a scale for lesser dues.) In the past year and a half, there have been over 100 new members across the state. Several chapters with new members have paid nothing. Treasurers and/or Presidents, please contact me (treasurer@fnow.org) if you'd like to discuss your chapter's obligations in this matter.

Also, since some of the chapters are utilizing Paypal for various reasons, I wanted to share some info with you. Paypal has started checking through their files, and contacting non-profit organizations. I'm not sure why, it might have something to do with the IRS. If you are contacted, you will be required to send them (by fax or upload) proof of your non-profit status. It's not hard at all, and only takes a few minutes. Contact me if you have any questions.

CHAPTER HAPPENINGS & COMMITTEE NEWS
What's going on around the state?

Jacksonville NOW : Celebrated the right to have birth control and spoke out against the groups trying to take away our rights to birth control on the June 7th anniversary of Griswold vs. Connecticut ; Participated in a panel discussion on Feminism at the University of North Florida (UNF) Women's Center Modern Woman Conference on June 12th; Community outreach at the downtown Jacksonville Art Walk, July 2nd ; Awarded two women \$1500.00 scholarships to Florida Community College of Jacksonville (FCCJ) through the annual Fern Smith Scholarship program. Fern Smith was a Jacksonville NOW member who set up this scholarship as part of her estate. Jacksonville NOW works with FCCJ to screen applicants and award the scholarships to deserving feminists. July 5th

North Palm Beach County NOW : In cooperation with Planned Parenthood and their Young Activists Team, we had a pub -crawl 10:30PM-1:00 AM on Mardi Gras Saturday. We distributed Mardi Gras beads with a message attached about the Morning After Pill, and condoms, to about 700 nightclub patrons. We also offered a lesbian safe sex handout. The action was well received. Planning was the key. The beads were very cheap & we recommend them! Contact npbcnow@aol.com , 561-802-3722, for details. **Along with the South Palm Chapter, we organized a successful Florida NOW State conference.**
 We take No on 2 info to all candidate interviews and campaign events. In Sept we will cooperate with the Classroom Teachers Assn and local state legislators to present. We were pleased to have a college student intern this spring who helped with endorsements. If a student approaches you, always say yes!!!

Brevard NOW : Brevard NOW has recently tackled the issue of the group that wants to take birth control away. There was an article in Florida Today about their mission. They say that birth control causes abortions, so we sent out a press release and received a request from Hometown news for interviews and the article came out right after 4th of July. With this came our new motto. "We save Women's Lives" Our President at the time Marlena Harold also got a letter to the editor printed in Florida Today that mentioned Brevard NOW.

Tallahassee NOW : participated in the second annual celebration August 26 at Lake Ella of ratification of women's right to vote. Several other women's organizations were involved.

Gainesville Area NOW : Gainesville Area NOW's May meeting was a CR on Birth -Control Myths, and for the summer months, we once again planned a summer film fest. We showed "ACLU Freedom Files -Women's Rights" and "NOW: 40 Fearless Years" in June. July brought several people in to see "Fundi: The Story of Ella Baker." In August, we showed " Warzone! " a direct and confrontational look at street harassment. All films were met with real interest and good discussions followed. In October, we have a joint panel planned with the Community Pride Center, the ACLU, Fairness for All Families, and the City Commission, to discuss Amendment 2.

Indian River NOW : August: Will celebrate Women's Equality Day; inviting the women candidates to speak. We generally get 40 -50 attendees; hope to get more this year, with the election.

South Palm Beach County : As a result of court watch, the WPP was formed. We have become aware of the horrible conditions in the PBC Women's Jails. We have visited these jails many times in the past year, met with staff and the Sheriff and have found that inhumane treatment is the norm. We have documentation from former and current prisoners as to the treatment they receive. Other Women's Organizations as well as State Rep. Maria Sachs have joined in our efforts to make significant changes in the Women's jails and holding cells of Palm Beach County. We recently made another visit to the jail and found that some of our concerns have been addressed. We continue to push for reform and humanization of county jails.

The Florida NOW Child Custody Committee was re-established during the 2008 state conference. Mari Fernandez, is the chair of the committee. Members include Karen Husain, past chair, Adele Guadalupe and Natalie Andre of SPBC NOW and founding members of Families Against Courtroom Travesties (FACTS), Cathie Rockwood, Judith Hague, and L.A. Key. We are excited about this committee reforming, and have resources to share with others. For more information and printed materials, contact Mari Fernandez, 813 -610-2842, fernandezmari07@gmail.com, Karen Husain 850 -536-0139, z4zeba@aol.com, Natalie Andre 561 -495-5412 or natandre@juno.com.

*****FEATURED ACTION—JUDY LEVY NOW*****

The Judy Levy Chapter of the National Organization for Women held a Community Forum on Sexism in the Media. For the first time ever there has been a national conversation about women's political participation. We are shocked at the amount of gender-based vitriol directed at Clinton in the primary race. The sheer volume of public misogyny jump -started a nation -wide dialogue about sexism.

This community wide round table discussion is the beginning of an ongoing conversation about media reform, sexism and racism. Wild Iris Bookstore and the UF's Center for Women's Studies and Gender Research were co -sponsors for the event. Having excellent speakers and Florida NOW president Jessica McCaffrey as moderator greatly contributed to the success of this action.

If you would like an action plan for this rapid -response organizing model, contact Judy Levy NOW president Connie Amidei at connie@anitron.com.

FLORIDA NOW AT-LARGE MEMBERS: There will be a conference call for you on October 2nd at 6 pm. Call the number 1 -800-444-2801 with participant code 3846007. This call is free to you. You can feel more a part of Florida NOW by becoming active in the at -large caucus. Join us and be heard! If you have any questions, contact Membership Director Jane Blanchard at membership@flnow.org. All at -large members welcome!

YOU CAN HELP FLORIDA NOW SAVE MONEY!!

Printing and mailing the newsletter is a huge expense for Florida NOW. Budget constraints allow for only two newsletters per year, 3 1/2 pages each.

You can help by signing up to receive your newsletter by email. If enough people will do it, we can do a more frequent, timely newsletter, full of the latest activities and news around the state. Please do so immediately by contacting Florida NOW vice-president Donna Slutiak at vp@fnow.org.

NOW NATIONAL CONFERENCE JULY 18-20, 2008

Over 400 feminists got together at the Hyatt Hotel in Bethesda, MD, for the 2008 national NOW conference. It was energizing, invigorating, and a great chance to meet new friends and get together with old ones. Lilly Ledbetter and Barbara Hillary each received the Woman of Courage Award, and Patricia Ireland was only the third woman in all of NOW's history, to receive the Woman of Vision Award. Workshops on subjects like Amendment 2 in Florida, setting up a Facebook and Myspace site for your chapter, dealing with the media, how to canvass, and universal health care, were held throughout the weekend.

Don't forget to attend next year's conference in Indianapolis, IN. It is an election conference. Hope to see you all there.